

MI Child Support Formula - Comment regarding proposed changes to child support guidelines

From: "Deb Kober" <debkober@attbi.com>
To: <focb@courts.mi.gov>
Date: 6/19/2003 9:57 PM
Subject: Comment regarding proposed changes to child support guidelines

Please forward to the appropriate person/department.

I am not opposed to a review of, and changes to, the state child support formula, if done properly and **all** factors are taken into consideration. From what I am reading, this is not the case here, and if allowed to pass, this new ruling WILL hurt my children.

Is this in **THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILDREN?**

Who really benefits from this change?

What many people overlook, and a formula based on the number of overnights would also not take into account, is that the custodial parent is responsible for the payment of many expenses, the cost of which do not change when the number of overnights change. This would include things as simple as school lunches, field trips, to cost of extra-curricular activities, clothing (many custodial parents are ordered to provide clothing to the non-custodial parent) and day care expenses, etc. Any custodial parent knows that there is an endless stream of "incidentals" that pop up daily.

My particular divorce document states that we are to share the cost of extra-curricular activities if we both support it. My ex-husband is currently in contempt of court for refusing to financially support ANY activity while telling me what he feels they should be in, demanding to be informed of their activities (I do tell him what they are doing), and insisting he will be there to support the children. I am doing my best to maintain the activities and interests the children had prior to our divorce, and to provide them as many opportunities as I can. I do not feel they should be short-changed because we could not make our marriage work. However, this becomes very difficult as many extracurricular activities have become quite expensive. Irregardless of what a child wants to participate in, if lessons are involved, the lessons alone begin around \$10/week, add to that special clothing or equipment, and if they do well and advance, MANY additional expenses - camps, travel, etc. Multiply that by two as I have two children. These activities are starting at younger and younger ages. The children see their friends participating in them and they want to participate also.

I strongly suggest that as formulas are being re-evaluated, more factors be taken into consideration than just the number of overnights. The number of overnights, alone, is not a relevant factor in the actual cost the custodial parent faces in raising children, which is the purpose of the formula.

As we "SHARE" more of the expense of raising the children (more overnights = more cost to the non-custodial parent = less child support to custodial parent), let's not forget to:

- share the responsibility for cost of "outside-the-home" expenses (school supplies, school lunches, etc.)
- share the responsibility for cost of day care
- share the responsibility for cost of clothing
- share the responsibility for cost of extracurriculars

- and any other "incidentals" that may arise.

My ex-husband has 118 overnights/year and flat refuses to assist in anything outside of child support because "that's what I pay you child support for". Keep in mind, he has that many overnights only because he gave up two weekday visits w/ his children for one weekday visit w/ an overnight because the driving time and expense to visit his children twice a week was too much of a burden. This burden was encountered living only 10 miles from the childrens home! He will now be rewarded for this type of attitude toward parenting.

Again, I am not opposed to re-evaluating the formula. However, let's re-evaluate the **entire** picture, not just a portion of it.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.

Debbie Kober